

the Atlantic side, and is also known on the Pacific side, though not so abundant there. In the markets of San Jose the fruit is always in great demand and brings a high price.

"The palm is a beautiful pinnate-leaved species, with a slender trunk reaching to 50 feet, though commonly not more than 35 feet. The leaves resemble those of *Cocos plumosa* and other palms of that type, while the trunk is armed from top to bottom with thin, sharp spines about 2 inches long. Flowers are produced in the spring, from March to June (occasionally at other times of the year), and are followed by stout racemes of fruit which matures principally in the autumn. The racemes sometimes weigh 25 pounds, and as many as 5 or 6 are produced by the palm in a single crop. The individual fruits are top shaped, up to 2 inches long, yellow to deep orange, with a thin skin, and a hard seed in the center surrounded by abundant flesh of orange or yellow color, firm texture, and dry, farinaceous character. Seedless varieties are known, and since these can be propagated, like date palms, by means of offshoots, of which the plant produces several in the course of its life, the establishment of superior forms should be simple.

"The 'pejibaye,' which is one of the most popular of all Costa Rican fruits (though it should not, perhaps, be called a fruit, except in a botanical sense) is prepared for eating by boiling for three hours in salted water, after which it is pared and the flesh, which strikingly resembles boiled chestnuts in appearance and flavor, is eaten without seasoning of any sort. Doubtless the fruit would lend itself to many uses, such as stuffing for fowl, but it is so good in its simple form that Costa Ricans have not sought to improve it by bringing it under the influence of culinary art.

"The palm is said to come into bearing at 6 to 8 years from seed, and to live at least 50 years. It is found in Costa Rica from sea level up to 5,000 feet elevation, but in extremely wet regions above 4,000 feet some of the palms do not bear. The ideal region for it seems to be, in this country, between 2,000 and 3,500 feet, and where the rainfall is not great. It does not appear to be particular as regards soil.

"The fruit contains about 40 per cent of carbohydrates, and according to an analysis made in San Jose, one pound of the flesh represents 1,096 calories of energy, which entitles the 'pejibaye' to serious consideration as a food plant. It seems to me that it